

A
CALL
TO
RECOLLECTION,
RESOLUTION,
AND
EXERTION,

WITH

A VIEW TO THE PRESENT STATE AND ESSENTIAL
INTERESTS OF THIS COUNTRY.

BY THE REV. R. P. FINCH, D. D.
PREBENDARY OF WESTMINSTER.

BLOW THE TRUMPET IN ZION. JOEL II. 15.

PUT ON THE WHOLE ARMOUR OF GOD. EPH. VI. 15.

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR F. AND C. RIVINGTON, NO. 62,
ST. PAUL'S CHURCH-YARD.

M.DCC.XCIV.

[Price 4d. or 3s. 6d. per Dozen.]

e

C. H. L. J.

PROCEEDINGS

RECEIVED

W. H. L. J.

A. H. L. J.

BY THE

OF THE

OF THE

OF THE

OF THE

OF THE

OF THE

OF THE

OF THE

A
C A L L
T O

Recollection and Resolution, &c.

IT is an old, and often repeated, remark, that every age is, in a moral view, apt to look upon itself with censure and disparagement. This prejudice has, perhaps, sometimes been unduely indulged; and, where comparisons have been invidiously introduced, led to imputations not perfectly consistent with truth or charity. But still it must be allowed, that every age has afforded abundant cause for complaint in this way; and that the present, so far from being an exception, furnishes a

B fulness

fulness of occasion to the exercise of an active zeal. So much being granted, there can be no presumption in examining into, and arraigning, our own practices and proceedings, when we are individually and socially, which we cannot but know, so interested in their consequences and effects. All history, prophane as well as sacred, proclaims this certainty with an uniformly according voice, that causes and effects bear, as they ever will, an established relation to each other. Disobedience brought death into the world, and it is the property of sin to produce misery in a great variety of forms and degrees. They who commit the one and feel the other, may, in some instances, affect to stifle conviction; but they cannot control the order established in nature by the God of nature, nor disannul what He hath by unvaried progress made inseparable. The more we know of this world, either from observation or from tradition by what our fathers have told us, the stronger and more impressive must be our assurance: insomuch that we cannot but discover our obligation, as moral Beings

ings and accountable Creatures, to submit to His government and obey His laws, however discoverable or manifested, who is the great King over all the earth, in whose hands is every living thing, and who is the author of all existence. It is indeed a lamentable truth, and too frequently in the changes of things temporal sadly verified, that mankind have apparently, whatever their sentiments or persuasions might be, disputed this supremacy of dominion, and attempted, if we may judge from their proceedings, to suppress this leading principle of conduct; as if they intended by violence to dethrone the Majesty of Heaven. Instances of resistance in this way have been continually occurring ever since the first existence of man. Creation produced rebellion, and, powerful as that guard was by which the all-wise Creator endeavoured to preserve them from criminal misconduct, partial disobedience, as numbers increased, soon became general, and by degrees excessive, and almost universal. This occasioned, at one most memorable period, the interference of divine justice, by bring-

ing in the flood upon the world of the ungodly. After which, this punishment, however seemingly severe, being ineffectual to a perfect and lasting reformation, new discoveries of omnipotent vengeance extorted by the most aggravated provocation, evinced the SUPREMACY OF GOD. Not only human agency was instrumentally employed to this purpose, in excisions and exterminations, in subversions and devastations, but things animate and inanimate, the elements, and the reptiles of the earth, as in the case of Pharaoh, and that northern army, the locusts, so strikingly described by Isaiah in terms of the sublimest eloquence, have been summoned to an exertion of their respective influence in vindication of that VIOLATED AUTHORITY, which, though man would not, they did acknowledge. Scriptural history is so very informing with respect to astonishing events thus produced, that we cannot fail to recollect them. But conviction in this view meets us throughout profane as well as sacred Narrative in all the accounts which have been transmitted from the earliest æra to the present time.

time. And now surely, if ever, we may give credit to a certain connection between the provocations of men and the visible visitations of God, when the tongue of blasphemy and the hand of violence are so conspicuously and so daringly displayed, and their evident consequences so dreadfully felt; whilst new-born iniquity is spreading desolation, overthrowing the thrones of the mighty, and attempting to lay waste the whole earth. In tracing this spirit to its rise, and attending it through its progress, the human mind is overwhelmed, and would be so without remedy, was it left to the workings of Reason alone. Mysteriousness so awful as this, when conjecture is stifled in a cloud of thick darkness, cannot be satisfactorily encountered without superiour assistance: which must come from that God, who, whatever evils He for wise purposes suffers to arise, knows how to control and stop them at the properest juncture, by saying to the passions of men, as He does to the raging of the sea, hitherto shall ye come, and no farther. Allusive to such interpositions of Omnipotence

tence are these striking and beautiful passages of the Psalmist: " I thought to understand this, but it was too hard for me, until I went into the sanctuary of God, then understood I the end of these men, namely, how thou dost set them in slippery places, and castest them down, and destroyest them.—I myself have seen the ungodly in great power, and flourishing like a green bay-tree; I went by, and lo he was gone, —Thou shalt bruise them with a rod of iron, and break them in pieces like a potter's vessel."

If we look at present to the transactions of a neighbouring country, we must be most awfully affected to see such abandoned licentiousness so uncontroled as it is; and almost lost in amazement, when we hear of the overflowing torrent of its destructive mischiefs. We may perhaps be apt to ask in the height of our wonder and under the pressure of extreme horror, Where is the God of judgment? We may, from the imperfection of our discernment and the eagerness of our zeal, be prompted to call down fire from heaven to consume such

Giants

Giants in rebellion ; or to say with the prophet, righteous art Thou, O Lord ; yet, in this instance, let us reason with Thee.

But when honest indignation pauses, and the resentment of the bleeding heart suffers us to be calmed into recollection, we shall soon discover the hand of God even now uplifted, and not only distinguish the rod, but see plainly who hath appointed it ; and be able to find out, what will hereafter be more fully and abundantly manifested, the causes as well as tendency and effects of its strokes. We shall be convinced that as in the natural world, with what exactness soever the general course of things proceeds, there are tempests, and volcanos, and earthquakes ; so in the moral world human passions will sometimes disturb and distract its usual order and symmetry ; that OFFENCES, in the prophetic language of its divine Luminary, will come, the effects as well as proof of a freedom of will in moral agents : come in defiance of His supreme authority and government, to whom is given all power in heaven and in earth. Such violences and destructive irregularities,

though they are the voluntary acts of men disobeying divine, and frustrating, in some measure, human laws, cannot however be perpetrated otherwise than with an allowance from the permissive providence of God, turning them to the execution of his own wise purposes; first, for the correction of other offenders; and finally, in the more signal punishment of themselves. It is impossible that the Prerogative of the Almighty should be disputed away by sophistical quibbles, or be annihilated by all the combined force of creature-resistance, which He can in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, destroy. The right hand of the Lord must have the Pre-eminence, and will always, in his own way, and at his own time, and by instruments visible and invisible, bring mighty things to pass.

If these remarks, founded upon eternal truth, and confirmed by uniform experience, are applied to the present state of the world, that part of it especially, which with an unexampled violence of monstrous depravity is attempting an unbounded subversion, in every view, of liberty, and property,

perty, and life, surely we shall be induced to reflect upon our own situation with suitable **SERIOUSNESS** and **CONCERN**.

These are terms, I am too well aware, which imply something very unpleasant to a dissipated age. It is like prescribing wholesome food to a vitiated appetite, when the patient with disgust rejects what is intended for his recovery. But when necessity enforces the application of the remedy, as in a political as well as moral and religious view it now does, a preference of life to death is unquestionably as rational as it is seasonable; and therefore, if in the body politic and in the moral constitution of man the head is sick, the heart faint, and wounds, and bruises, and putrifying sores, threaten, by the rapidity of their progress, dissolution, the prophet's question to an infatuated people, together with the exhortation subjoined, may most fitly be recollected; and should be profitably improved; Why will ye die? wherefore turn yourselves, and live ye.

Whoever will take time to deliberate upon the present circumstances of this

country, once happily distinguished by simplicity of manners and sobriety of conduct, especially in the middle ranks of life, will unavoidably discover a melancholy departure from the long established standard of British correctness, and see a legion of indiscretions, follies, and vices, crowding upon his offended eye, and contending, with an emulous impetuosity, which shall make most sail and arrive quickest at the haven of perdition. This remark, it is hoped, will not be construed into moroseness, or undue severity of censure; for he, who makes it, is far from indulging such a turn; but he perceives, and wishes others to perceive, that reasonable compliances and extravagant adventures into the wide field of libertinism, are very different; and that whilst social as well as individual comfort depends upon the one, the great interests of human nature, in every view, are continually and without hesitation sacrificed to the other. The havock thus made in regard to our dearest interests in this world, and our depending enjoyments in another, is terrible

ble beyond description; and if no controul is put upon the career of passions unduely indulged, not only eternal indignation awaits our impenitence, but temporal punishments, growing out of our own extravagancies, must overtake our obstinacy and perverseness. Like causes, ALL HISTORY declares it, will have, by the appointment of God in the nature of things, like effects. From whence arises, could we prove a negative as to another life, which is impossible, a powerful argument for our acting wisely in this, had we no other evidence than that of authentically recorded facts to determine our conduct. But, besides this testimony, our own observation may, in one instance at least, convince and ought to direct us. The dreadful and unparalleled excesses thus brought on in a neighbouring country by unwarrantable discontent, and aggravated by outrageous cruelty, in open violation of every restraint, political, moral, and religious, and in equal contempt and defiance of God and man, with a prospect of abounding misery and distress, should not merely excite sympathy; but make us look at home,

and examine into our own case and situation, that we may guard against evils too likely, otherwise, to overtake us. To this end reflection may profitably employ us, by attending to the state of religion, our political and social concerns, engagements, and obligations, and the general turn of our manners and habits. In respect to the first and greatest object with which, as rational agents, we must be everlastingly connected, it is our happiness to be supplied with a fulness of light, having our Bibles open to us, and the glad tidings of the Gospel shining upon the soul in all their native lustre. The Reformation, long established in this country, opened the prison-doors of dark superstition, and purely purged away its dross, announcing liberty to the captive, and recovery of sight to them who were blind. The zeal for truth thus laudably discovered and supported, as it most visibly hath been, by the prevailing hand of our Almighty Protector, continued to inspire with a just sense of gratitude the hearts of men, till by degrees a coldness and indifference took place, which at length are
grown

grown into neglect and contemptuousness, and have given opportunity to the enemy to sow his tares, the tares of Infidelity and Atheism. Such is the sad beginning of sorrows in this way, originating not altogether from home-born depravity, but from fatal importations of gilded poison under the enchanting name of Philosophy, though utterly repugnant to its real dictates. Very extravagant credit has been given to that country, which is the source of these fatal mischiefs, for light and wisdom, which were far from being its national characteristics in better days, however they might out of so multitudinous a people in some few instances be found. But they are now, by a most melancholy depression of their influence, absorbed and lost in the devouring vortex of despotic phrensy. Superstition first cast a mist over the eyes of its votaries, and then left them exposed, through ignorance of their duty, and without a just sense of the blessings they might have enjoyed, to the delusions of Sophistry, and the inveigling novelties of pestilential Empiricism. Thus their Candlestick, (so far,

at

at least, we may look to prophecy generally denouncing) like that of the Asiatic churches, is removed, and they, who are, however mistaken in some points of creed and discipline, seriously attached to the cause of Christianity in their way, are driven to the shocking alternative of a cruel death, or a state of suffering and exile. An example abounding with instruction to us, who have, by contracting a scornful contempt for things and acts of a sacred nature, been long drawing back unto perdition, to prepare, by a settled uniformity of religious conduct, to meet our God in all the dispensations of His Providence. Our light is strong and clear. The word of God in this land of Christian freedom is not bound, nor the kingdom of heaven shut against any, except such as exclude themselves by wilful unbelief and unpardonable impenitence; such as infinite mercy itself cannot by all the inducements of compassion and love compel to come in. We should do well to remember that there is in regard to this world as well as the next, especially under extraordinary circumstances

cumstances of trial, an accepted time, and a day of salvation. Nineveh laid to heart this reflection, and profited by it. Paris despised it, and is undone. May we see and pursue the things which belong to our peace and preservation both temporal and eternal! So shall we be earnest in giving public countenance to Religion and its ordinances, and feel the good effect, by a corresponding practice, of its influence upon our lives.

There is another call upon our reflection as deeply interested in the preservation and support of national happiness, and, with a view to that, the peace and order and prosperity of the kingdom. They must be very ignorant who want to be informed that in this country there are to every class of people the fullest means of enjoyment, both individually and socially, perhaps beyond any other upon earth. For our constitution, meliorated and improved, by long experience and sound wisdom, is the best balanced, and therefore most commodiously adapted to the great ends of its institution, of any other, we may say, which does or
which

which can well exist. Its laws, in all their aims, and in all their directions and restraints, are founded upon UNIVERSAL RIGHT, and converge, like the rays of a circle, to one central point, the security of its members, of every rank and degree, high and low, rich and poor, from the Monarch upon the throne to the peasant in the field, all being comprehended in one common protection. Perfection indeed attaches to no earthly system, and therefore we must not look for it in this. But to defame and traduce it, and upon idle pretences or sinister designs, the usual source of complaints, to raise popular outcries, and with a view to effect the mischievous purposes of defamers and subverters, is an aggravation of criminal baseness, originating, probably, in selfish disappointment and invidious discontent, which disgraces the human, and is utterly repugnant to the Christian character. It is an engine, which, when once set to work, knows not where, or when, or how to stop, but operates with uncontrolled violence, so long as it has power to act, or, in other words, till its machinery

chinery drops to pieces. What is here said will be found to be literally true in respect to the progress of strife founded in malevolence, when the spirit of rebellion, or, in modern speech, reformation, rushes on with impetuous career, until property, liberty, law, religion, and life, all become the victims of its fury. If conviction is wanted, go to that reprobate country before alluded to, in which you will find a race of self-formed monsters, the pretended idolizers of Reason and Liberty, but the destroyers of both; whose every aim is to spread and establish rapine, desolation, and murder; and their governing maxim to curse God and die. The overthrow of states and kingdoms is not enough to satiate their mad ambition: it is their execrable philosophy, by all the acts of diabolic exertion, to overthrow human nature.

Is there one individual amongst Britons who can approve such frantic proceedings, or apologize for, or be inclined to adopt, the measures of these savage upstarts? If there is, it would be well that this happy land was rid of so unnatural a son, and that
he

he was banished to that region of infidelity, darkness, and death, where the heathen rage together, and the people are encouraged to imagine a vain thing. We cannot reflect upon our own depending interests, temporal or eternal, without seeing in what a hazardous situation all these are, and with what solicitude we ought to exert ourselves in their preservation. The circumstances of the times are, indeed, most extraordinary and most alarming, and mischief in the extreme had nearly overtaken us. Not to see and acknowledge the hand of God in all this, would argue a blindness of understanding, as well as a corruption of heart, which can result from no other cause than the most abandoned profligacy. This hath long been obvious in that country, where its bitter fruits now abound; and it can be no secret that some of the worst inhabitants of this island have been employed in importing many of its most baneful ingredients. Our conduct, in this view of it, has, indeed, been most notoriously disgraceful: for at the very time we were expressing, in terms of strong national prejudice

judice (not always creditable in itself) our dislike to the people, we have, with a low servility, imitated their manners and practices even to apish extravagance. Nor has our folly been thus sufficiently gratified. We have encouraged an application to their language quite up to enthusiasm; and, not contented with the levities of their writings, have been ambitiously emulous to study the worst of them, and to imbibe with fondness the poison conveyed by these intoxicating streams of profane reverie. Nay, our complimentary attachment to this fantastic foible has been such as to induce us in common life to make use of terms in their language, of which few know the meaning, to the exclusion of our own; and in high life, nay in lower too, the cup of intoxication, in a moral view, has been made so familiar to our taste, that we have at length not merely sipped, but drank deep of it to the very dregs, till, like themselves, we have been ready to violate the most sacred and established obligations, and to sacrifice at the altar of libertinism our most inestimable interests and enjoyments in a religious as well

well as a political view. Testimonies in proof of this assertion are far too many and too convincing. Amongst other prostitutions of our personal consequence and national dignity, there is one generally connected with other follies and vices, which I almost tremble to mention, I mean Gambling; the ruinous employment both of time and property, and the treacherous enemy of credit and friendship, and every most commanding tie which ought to bind men to each other. Not only fortunes are thus melted down in this crucible of destruction, but families are often disgraced and undone. God is, perhaps ostentatiously, slighted; his prerogative spurned; his solemn sabbath profaned; and dissolution spread, as it unavoidably must, where such misconduct prevails, through all ranks of the Community. Every neglect or misapplication of the one day in seven, where undue indulgencies take place, however plausible the pretences for them, must, in some degree, have this effect, and tend to the undermining political stability as well as religious

ligious order: for this being once destroyed, the other can have no secure support.

Here is a call again, upon reflection, and ample room for its activity, especially where MAGISTRACY exists, and LAW is not yet abolished. The axe must be resolutely laid to the root of the tree, whether it is on high or low ground, impartiality shew itself not in a fugitive but continued zeal for the security of our best blessings, and the averting evils destructive of all true enjoyment. Look at the generations of old, preceding our own, see whether national depravity and public prosperity have usually accompanied each other, or whether distress, and at last overthrow, have not been the attendants or consequences of unrestrained folly and abounding vice, levity of conduct and profligacy of manners. You will find cities, states, and great bodies of men bearing uniform testimony to the rule of Omnipotence, and be compelled to acknowledge that verily there is a God who judgeth the earth. External resistance may disappoint the aims of our enemies, and perhaps
be,

be, as we naturally wish, productive of triumph; but no triumph can be complete, or lastingly successful in its consequences and influence, unless there is internal rectitude and self-command, a reasonable control of, otherwise, domineering passions, and habits of economy founded in temperance and discretion, adapted to the condition of individuals as well as the state of the community; there being no position so false, if closely examined, as this, that private vices contribute to public good. Such an imagination is as little consistent with experience, as it is consonant to natural or divine light. All evil practice, and all dissipation, must be mischievously extensive, and have an influence dreadfully contagious over the conduct of others. We must be blind not to discern this in the present day, when high and low, rich and poor, meet together in a new sense of association, spending a large portion of their time as well as property in diversions and amusements, such as lead them, persons of inferior rank especially, into distresses and disgraces injurious not only to themselves, but

but to their families. The attendance upon places of pleasure, most alarmingly increased and increasing, cannot be without much expence, often very disproportionate to the purse of the indulging party; and this induces a temptation to find supplies from extortion and plunder; the end of which is too often an ignominious, and premature, and fatal death. Gaming, that most bewitching devourer of time and substance, is, in continual instances, productive of undoing; yet adventurers are not discouraged, but the highest (if that term consists with such practice) go on rapidly to ruin, and the lowest emulously pursue the shadow of imagination, though they know the gallows is the boundary of their plan. Another source of mischief is dress, especially in the female sex; not such as to adorn, but to disguise, their persons, and through an affectation of fantastical appearance to confound all distinctions of rank and order. This sort of foppery, productive of ruinous extravagance to many, and infecting to extreme offensiveness the other sex, even so far as, in certain views, to disgrace

grace professional character, has been greedily imported, and, in some respects, most ridiculously exceeded, from a neighbouring country, whose vices as well as follies we have been too prone to imitate; till at length we are so entangled in the fatal snare, as to adopt notions not merely prejudicial to social comfort and safety, but utterly subversive of all civil polity, even of the christian religion itself. Nay, they tend to the planting licentiousness upon the ruins of liberty, and, consequently, to the extinction of all moral sense, and the introduction of barbarism and heathen darkness. Here then we should do well to pause, before the conscience is quite seared, and suffer RECOLLECTION and RESOLUTION to execute their office, by leading us to ask some well adapted questions, and to be affected and determined by the answers naturally resulting from them. Such are these: whether an established political constitution, improved to a degree of excellence beyond any other in the known world, is not preferable to the baseless fabric of an utopian, republican, undefined, and, perhaps, impracticable

practicable system? whether a regular government, in which there is equal attention paid to the interests, the security, and the comfort of all ranks, is not more eligible than any loose plan of treacherous fraternization or the blustering conceits of giddy anarchists? whether quietness and peace are not more desirable than confusion and uproar? whether riot and rapine, cruelty and murder, are not better guarded against than admitted? whether simplicity of manners is not more productive of general as well as individual benefit than foppery and extravagance? whether prudence is not a more successful guide to enjoyment than fantastic and uncontrolled levity; and, in short, whether the votaries of discretion are not more happy in themselves than they who live in a round of intoxicating indulgence? but above all, whether we can consistently with our own good, and security, and obligation, throw off the restraints of religion and live without God in the world? The answer to this question, except where obduracy hath benumbed the soul with a fatal chill, must be universally one. For

C

the

the relation is inseparable, and whatever strangeness we may unnaturally contract in regard to its influence, we cannot fly from, nor avert, its effects. Penalties visible and invisible attend, and follow, and will, as the reasons and ends of divine government require, surely be inflicted. We see it so at this moment in judicial blindness and the most dreadful disasters which human nature can feel, first falling upon the victims of infidel vengeance, and then, by the wonderful workings of an all-disposing providence, in sure Circulation, upon those perfidious monsters, whose delight had been in overthrow and plunder, in cruelty and blood. Whatever there may be in such events of clouds and darkness, enough of righteousness and judgment will appear to enforce conviction, and inspire the heart with alarm. It should seem under that complete dispensation of light and knowledge which the GOSPEL brings, that where it has been admitted such horrible excesses could not prevail; but, whilst we recollect what perverse creatures mankind are, and that they are, though induced and assisted, and encouraged,

couraged, not compelled, to be wise and good, we are prepared to hear reports of the extravagance arising from wilfulness and uncontrouled passions. Hence hath God, known to whom are all things both before and after they are called into action, not only declared what will be the consequence of such conduct in Beings capable of moral choice, as they are virtuous or wicked, but he hath plainly predicted the great alterations and changes in the world, the downfall and desolation of states and kingdoms; in a vast variety of which cases the event hath corresponded to the prediction with an exactness equally tending to surprize and convince. To the same purpose we find in the New Testament, that treasury of glad and peaceful tidings, that the divine Author does not profess to overrule, by a mechanical impulse, the passions of men, but foresees and foretels their unperfuadableness under all the means and motives of GRACE, insomuch that he says, I came not to send peace but the sword; and again, it is impossible but that offences will come; and he represents, that the

nearest and tenderest ties of affinity will be insufficient to restrain the turbulencies of the human mind, insomuch that a man's foes shall be those of his own household. Many like predictive accounts of the sad disorders resulting from uncontrolled violence in human nature are remarkably given, and as remarkably verified in the continual abuses of the freedom of will essential to the existence of moral agents in a state of trial. But what is most to be lamented upon a view of this melancholy truth is, that a confederacy in this way hath been too often observable in the world. To such an event our prophetic Saviour most decidedly looks when he speaks of his sending fire on the earth, pointing more directly to the terrible overthrow of Jerusalem when infidelity and disobedience became their own executioners, and brought on complicated destruction by a mutual and almost universal slaughter. The things which belonged to their peace were judicially hidden from their eyes, and, as Josephus, the Jewish historian, represents, an unrelenting and undistinguishing ferocity displayed their acts
of

of vengeance in carnage and desolation. A mournful picture of the effects of resistance to the counsels and laws of God! to which it would have been difficult to find a parallel, until our own day produced it in a country, where the extravagancies of superstition and the yoke of despotism laid that foundation upon which infidelity and profaneness have raised a superstructure of rebellion, apostacy, and confusion, that baffle description and overwhelm the feelings of Humanity.

Let us now reflect upon these circumstances, and appeal calmly, as duty and interest direct, to our faculties of reason and judgment. Are the authors of such direful and extended mischief fit persons to organize other nations and to meliorate the constitution of this in particular? is such an example fit for a people abounding in the best gifts of Heaven to follow, or shall we not be most resolutely guarded against all the artifices and intrigues of such pestilential enemies, when we must see, if not fatally blinded by prejudice and corruption, that every approach to a fraternization as unnatural as it

is treacherous, is a step to perdition, political, moral, and religious, temporal and eternal. For what else can be the end of denying the only LORD GOD AND OUR SAVIOUR JESUS CHRIST, whilst reason and liberty, the property and the privilege of man, are personified, and idolized, and deified, at the very instant in which both are abused and sacrificed, the one as a victim to profaneness, the other to licentiousness. Alas! we have too long been the dupes of a pery and folly, and blindly attached ourselves to the forceries of an enchantress, who, with a view to a finished conquest in our national subjugation, has almost induced us to surrender the use of our own language in favour of the Gallic tongue. A very despicable and reproachful change indeed! But we know far too much of it as a vehicle of poison under the abused name of Philosophy, and as a part of education, female especially, trifling and ridiculous. O that we were wise! that we could discern the traps and snares, into which we blindly rush, and at once disdain and shun compliance, knowing that the end, long aimed at
by

By a cunning, silently but surely subversive of British confidence and British security, is death ; not in one, but in every sense which can affect our enjoyments as men, as citizens, and as Christians.

The state of the world at this time is peculiarly striking ; and if we look as we ought beyond the enterprises of men, the hand of God must appear in the present stupendous revolution of things. His judgments, there can surely be no presumption in applying this term, are abroad. We cannot be surprised that they should be called forth, when we know how iniquity abounds ; that it puts on new shapes, proceeds to new excesses, and bids defiance to all power human and divine. We are already too sensible, from an unhappy participation in their effects, of the mischiefs thus produced, of the fatal tendency and desolating spread of usurping violence. Our concern should be to avert its attacks by a vigilant opposition and a vigorous resistance in every way in which our faculties can be applied. A reliance upon the arm of flesh will not be sufficient. Victory of this kind, should it be obtained,

will not secure our welfare. We must look internally to our condition, and employ all the more effective means of preservation which recollection can suggest, or resolution execute: the first and most infallible of which must be obedience to the laws of God, as it comprehends all the great and unalterable duties of religion and morality, which will lead directly to a quiet and conscientious submission to established human authority, in its different relations, directions, modes, and appointments, as they severally tend to individual comfort and to social support; with which is strictly connected the peace and order of national government, and the security of every political institution.

There never has been, until the present moment of infatuation, but one opinion about the influence of religion upon national establishments in every view, not as an engine of priestcraft, but as the best and most substantial Basis, originating in the will of God and the nature and constitution of things, of human happiness. In a state of heathenism it has always been thought so, and in proportion to the civilization of
society

society its rites and cultivation have been provided for and secured. Under the instructive light and vivifying comforts of Revelation, wherever the beams of the SUN of RIGHTEOUSNESS have shone, the effects of such a provision have been most clearly seen and most sensibly felt. In this happy land such a persuasion, productive of suitable attention, has successively, tho' not perhaps uniformly, marked our annals, and been the glory of our name. At this time, thanks to the wonderful protection of an all-governing and all-supporting Providence, the Gospel of Christ is preserved to us in the fulness of its divine lustre; and that ECCLESIASTICAL POLITY, which has long been our reasonable boast, remains, in spite of different attempts to overthrow it, unfulled and unimpaired. Now the questions, which we ought to put to ourselves, are these; whether our manners and our habits are such as correspond to the advantages which we enjoy? whether the pursuits, in which we engage, are consistent with the character of christian believers and good citizens; and, if they are not, what will probably be the

result? This question is most interesting, and appeals with a fulness of force to every one's understanding, and to every one's heart. The fatal experiment of undue indulgence and criminal pleasure hath been too long tried; their fruits are known to be bitter, and their end is frequently in a natural, certainly in a moral view, found to be death.

Under circumstances more alarming than ordinary, when a very large part of Europe is in a state of ferment; when the hearts of some are fainting for fear, or tortured with woe, and the hearts of others are inspired by the rankest malevolence of hell, no doubt surely can arise in the minds of them whom thought hath not quite deserted, what they shall do; whether they shall sacrifice to wanton folly and lethargic supineness all their most substantial interests in this world, and barter for perishing gratifications all their brightest hopes in another; or whether they shall, by a faithful adherence to the duties of religion, and the common obligations of man, provide for their own salvation, and that of their country, by being what, without self-reformation

tion

tion they cannot be, good Patriots as well as consistent Christians.

Other foundation can no man lay, upon which public safety or private happiness will be supported, or can at all subsist. The appeal lies to all History, profane as well as sacred, there being no producible instance where luxury and venality, debauchery and riot, and all the wild excesses of frantic licentiousness, contributed to real enjoyment social or individual. Reflect then before the night cometh, approaching, perhaps quickly, as it is, in which no work can be done, no exertion made upon your certain interests and depending good, in time and in eternity, upon the striking contrast of condition between happiness and misery, as the one results from wisdom, and the other from folly; the one from a right improvement, the other from a base prostitution, of those faculties which God hath bountifully imparted to human nature. Reflect in a moment of seriousness, for surely such moments there must be, what you are doing, and to what ends your actions are directed; whether you so use this world as not abusing it; and whether you look with a cheerful

ful confidence in divine mercy through Jesus Christ to another. With a view to which repentance from dead works is our remedy; but this will never operate to good effect 'till it produces a life unto righteousness, that being the great end of all the expedients which can be applied. Here then let our resolution cast its anchor, that our hope may be animated, our gloom disperse, our prospect brighten, our approach to death and judgment, which we know are every moment nearer, may be rendered comfortable and serene.

But if such events are in the workings of natural causes and the course of God's government decisively settled, and there are faculties in us corresponding to our wants, and adapted by a suitable exercise to our trials, RECOLLECTION can hardly fail at this moment to have its due influence upon our minds, whether we consider our obligations to our Almighty Benefactor in the visitation of his love and the alarms of his providence, or the solemn vows of obedience lately made, by which we have bound ourselves under an awful apprehension of
those

those impending evils that are now so feverely felt by others. Questions must arise upon this view of things, which, if we deal fairly with ourselves, call for direct and faithful answers, and should inspire vigilance, activity, and perseverance in regard to our conduct both as Citizens and Christians, whose greatest interests are at stake, and for the sacrifice of which no compensation can be made. Shall we then tamely surrender our best and most substantial blessings into the enemy's hand, or shall we use our utmost exertion in every way to defend and preserve them? Is religion, too long slighted and neglected in its institutes, its discipline, rites, and practical influence, at length become so insignificant in our esteem, that, after liberating and preserving it from the yoke of superstitious bondage, we shall wholly throw it off and abandon ourselves to the uncontrouled licentiousness of infidel scorn, living without God in the world? Shall we, as others have most profanely done, surrender our temples to the MAN OF SIN, with his infernal host, who professedly war against heaven, with all the wildness of diabolic blasphemy and profaneness?

ness? shall we, as they have done in the extravagance of their ravings, persecute and murder the ministers of Jesus, to employ the priests of Baal and offer up to Moloch human victims, instigated by the barbarous examples of Gallic tribunals—without mercy—without restraint—all shadow of compassion for rank, for sex, for age, for character and merit being absorbed in unfeeling rancour, which no innocence can soften nor justice controul? shall we exchange HALLEUJAH for IO PÆAN, adopt pagan orgies, and, in contradiction to its own dictates, deify reason, and with all the insolence of wanton triumph desecrate the temple of God? Surely, Britons are not ripe for such madness, whatever the measure of our iniquity may be; nor is it supposable, that we should barter pure christianity for the unhallowed maxims of frantic delusion, under the specious, but much abused, name of Philosophy. Better had it been for that devoted country whose infatuated conduct inspires us with aggravated and increasing horror, to have possessed divine truth even in an adulterated state, than to have extinguished the degree of light
by

by which they were cheered, and be lost in midnight darkness. Bad as the constitution might before be, this is a dreadful contrast, and should serve as a powerful admonition to us to stand fast in the liberty with which Christ hath made us free; whilst we keep in constant remembrance our Lord's emphatic charge, never more applicable, in every sense, than at this time, **WHAT I SAY TO YOU, I SAY TO ALL, WATCH ***.

Questions again may be put relative to our political liberty, our personal property, and the security of our lives; and in every instance, as well as in the case of every individual throughout all ranks of society, satisfactory answers will most aptly apply. As to **LIBERTY**, there is no government under heaven where it is better understood, more jealously guarded, or more scrupulously maintained, without any exception or reserve, as to high and low, rich and poor; the law, without which liberty cannot exist, being equally provident for its protection on all sides, and in every one's behalf. Under such an auspicious influence, two

* In a christian view such attention is always necessary; in a political one, it is now peculiarly so.

most

most formidable evils are avoided, its being used, as we see elsewhere it is, for a cloke of malicioufness, and its degenerating into destructive and all confounding licentiousness. If we enquire farther, how we are circumstanced in this country in regard to PERSONAL PROPERTY, what is the result? Have we not all the fullest assurance of safety? Each in his respective station and condition hath a hedge planted about him and about his house, which the wild boar out of the wood cannot root up, nor the wild beast of the forest devour; which democratic knavery cannot yet subvert, (God grant it never may!) nor the fury of the anarchist lay waste; to which nothing can give a decided effect but our own insensibility, negligence, and corruption. Let us then temporally as well as spiritually recollect of what infinite consequence it is to ourselves to attend earnestly, in every application of that term, to the day of SALVATION, and vigilantly to secure, by our own active concurrence, those blessings, which so peculiarly attach to our national character and state, rejoicing in hope of, as well as fervent in prayer for, their uninterrupted continuance,

tinuance, under the protection of a most
 gracious God. Lastly, if we look to the
 preservation of LIFE in the view of political
 care and legal security, where, upon earth,
 can more effectual provision be made? All
 is done, which can in the nature of things
 be done, for our safety and individual en-
 joyment, throughout all classes of the com-
 munity, from the highest to the lowest.
 For subordination, without which no com-
 munity can subsist, is the very Basis of uni-
 versal preservation, under the well con-
 trived and well judged sanctions of esta-
 blished authority. These are what God
 hath, in the wise constitution of nature,
 joined together, and what man cannot,
 by any possible attempt, put asunder;
 nor make the experiment, without intro-
 ducing a host of plagues worse than Egyp-
 tian, by filling the land with confusion
 and violence, with slaughter and blood,
 with lamentation, and mourning, and woe:
 which are curses far too severe to be called
 to mind without agonizing the heart, even
 when heard of at a distance, whilst the
 Throne and the Altar are equally violated
 and subverted. But what would they be if
 brought

brought home and prevailing within our own long happy and much envied border? What would they be, should we become, like other ferocious savages, alienated from humanity by their own vain imaginations, our own executioners? Would we have the guillotine, that new invented engine of infernal cruelty, imported into our island to propagate liberty, and enforce fraternization? Then let us encourage disaffection, and, by the enchantment of falsehood, diffuse a spirit of groundless murmur and ungrateful discontent, we shall soon see desolation ensue, and universal ruin spread itself over the delightful spot of this fertile Canaan. But if we pause, and contemplate our surrounding and abundant blessings, and weigh their intrinsic value, in a just balance, a cordial unanimity will pervade our councils, a well tempered and steady zeal will preserve our religion, and run, like an electrical stroke, through the nerves of the community: law will fortify our liberty, prudence will guard our property under the sanction of national wisdom, and our lives will be secure from the insidious violence of merciless destroyers. In short,

whilst recollection sets before us, in pleasing array, our long enjoyed blessings, and gratitude impresses upon our hearts a due sense of our obligations to the Supreme Giver, we cannot, except through unpardonable obduracy, forget, or forbear, the sincere application of our solemn vows to the Majesty of Heaven; but reflection will so animate, and resolution so support us, in the performance of our duties personal and social, that having conquered our internal enemies, our follies and our vices, we may look up with hopeful confidence to the succour of the Almighty, and contend without dismay against the stratagems of external foes, who, however inveterate in malice, or artful in wiles and circumvention, or active in the destruction of Royalty, and the overthrow of social Order, Government, and Tranquility, can never reasonably expect so favourable a result from their desperate and unprincipled stratagems as we may from our confidence in the Lord of Hosts, if we cultivate that confidence with unanimous perseverance and uprightness of heart.

OUR ALL is at stake. The World, great part of it at least, is in a state of strange agitation;

agitation; new things, untold in history, have arisen, and the amazement as well as apprehension of mankind is excited to an uncommon extent. Time seems to be pregnant with events no less interesting than awful. Drowiness and luxury may, for it is their natural tendency, undo us. Exertion and Union are, under the care of Divine Providence, our only promising preservatives, conducted and cemented, as they must be, by that temper and firmness which religion alone can inspire. So may we hope, whatever clouds at present obscure our political horizon, to see this darkness dispersed with triumphant gladness, when we may with unpresuming gratitude apply to ourselves that exulting salutation of the Jewish Lawgiver to Israel: **HAPPY ART THOU, O BRITAIN, A PEOPLE SAVED OF THE LORD, WHO IS THE SHIELD OF THY MIGHT, AND THE SWORD OF THINE EXCELLENCY.**

T H E E N D.